

**Community Preservation Act Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 2, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Mary Streeter, Chair, in the Town Room.

Committee Members in Attendance: Marilyn Blaustein, Paris Boice, Jim Brissette, Laura Lovett, Jim Oldham, Diana Stein, Mary Streeter

Absent: Peter Jessop, Pari Riahi,

Staff / Others in Attendance: Sonia Aldrich, Jonathan Tucker, Dave Ziomek, Andy J. Steinberg, Linda Chalfant, Ralph Faulkingham, Steve Bloom, Jane Wald, Jeff Baker, Jonathan Wright, Wendy Kohler, Ken Rosenthal, Jim Wald, Georgia Barnhill, Carol Gray, Barbara Bilz, Larry Kelley, Bob Romer, members of the First Church, Others

Agenda items discussed:

- Presentations of Recreation & Historic Preservation Proposals.

Time	Proposal	Amount
7:00	Town of Amherst - Modernization of Groff Park (13) – Linda Chalfant	\$600,000
7:20	First Congregational Fire Sprinkler System (1) – Ralph Faulkingham	\$357,647
7:40	No. Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset Historical District Consultant (2) – Steve Bloom	\$5,000
8:00	Dickinson Museum Evergreens Fire Suppression System (3) – Jane Wald	\$200,000
8:20	Amherst Historical Society and Museum - legal/carpentry/dendrology (4) – Jim Wald	\$42,500
8:40	Amherst Historical Com -Christopher Thompson Memorial Stone (5) – Added:	\$5,000
	Historical Commission Due Diligence Funds (15) Jonathan Tucker	\$10,000
9:00	Little Red School House (14) – Carol Gray	\$10,000

- Public Comment.
- Brief Discussion of Proposals/Further Questions.
- Approve any Minutes.

Presentations:

#13 (see above for numbering). Town of Amherst - Modernization of Groff Park David Ziomek and Linda Chalfant, LSSE Director: Dave described materials in the packet and the map. In the past, we spent funds for War Memorial Pool and others—these are very successful. But many neighboring Towns have spray parks and citizens have requested this for Amherst too. The logical place would be Groff Park. The project would in phase 1 design and fix pavilion; in phase 2 build a shade structure and playground. Dave went over diagrams. Photos show the need for repairs. The wading pool is old—50 plus years. A few years ago, new restrooms, storage and a walk way for ADA access were built but the latter does not reach all facilities. The playground is dated and not ADA accessible. The Town tried to maintain the wading pool but will only do so for one more summer (2016) because the cost-benefit analysis says not worth it. It needs leaks repaired and a lifeguard. And the swim season is not that long but a

spray park would be usable for much longer each summer. The old pavilion can be reroofed for \$5-7,000—it will be improved in place. It is in the flood plane so not it is not worth doing more. Phase 1-design cost would be \$50,000, the spray park, etc. is rest of \$600,000 request. Berkshire designer is Peter Wells—he helped prepare the estimates. Linda says there are many advantages; particularly accessibility would provide benefit.

Questions from Committee and answers:

Jim B. Is it possible to keep a wading pool as concern has been expressed that the spray would not be safe for toddlers? Also would the older pavilion be ADA accessible? David replied we propose to fix the pavilion on the lower level—it would not be ADA accessible with changes but the upper level with the comfort stations and playground etc. would be. He showed some examples. Barb was asked to discuss the pros and cons of the wading pool. She said there is not room enough for both. Advantages to a spray park are expanded season, broader age range and the design would make it safest. Mary asked about elements for younger children, noting that many of us hated to see the wading pool go. Dave brought up image of smaller spray parks that would include toddlers and different ages. Paris noted sprays are scary for younger children, and that they should be considered. Dave used as an example Holyoke; it is fairly simple and the oval can be used as skating rink in winter. Mary asked about the surface as that in Look Park is not that safe. Barb said Look Park was one of the first spray parks. They are looking at various types and want the safest. Mary suggested that they have a couple of puddles for the younger kids. Linda said there will be community forums as part of design process. It will be what the people here want including benches, places for families can sit, shade spots etc. Mary said you apply for a PARC grant in July, hear back in November and construction starts in the spring 2017. Dave noted that wading pools are available at Groff and at Mill River—and that the new facility would be free. Jim O. asked what is the footprint for this? And about the playground—new or rebuild old? Dave showed on map. They will replace the old play structures. They will not over build but keep park as a simple as possible—not cutting into fields or lower level.

#1. First Congregational Fire Sprinkler System – Ralph Faulkingham and Doug Marshall both members of the church were present, the latter presented. Theirs was a request for sprinklers –as part of a larger project where they are trying to increase access to the building by installing an elevator etc. The church building is in both the National Historic District and the local Dickinson Historical District. The church has a close involvement with the Dickinsons and the gothic features fit into the District and is a historic resource. He provided three reasons for support: it is in the Town's interests--the Church contributes to the story of Emily Dickinson, the gothic building contributes to the tourist experience, and there are many social services provided to the Town's neediest citizens so its loss would be significant.

Questions from Committee and answers:

Mary said the advice from the Historical Commission put this project last on their list of recommendations. We have so many historical buildings that could ask for fire suppression. The Historical Commission thought you had other resources and that the request was overly large. Perhaps \$200,000 would be better. What would you do if no money from CPAC? They were not sure. They now have new estimates of cost, which have increased from 1.1 million to 1.2 million. Maybe they would put the elevator into foot print of building. Right now it adds to the footprint. Marilyn. If elevator is in the footprint, you are not required to have sprinkler/ No but it would be a smaller project. Jim O. I am trying to understand the numbers. Line 21 is for the cost of buying the sprinkler but this is less than the request. He replied, we need a contractor to deliver it, put it in in, and it needs a water supply, a room for housing the pump system and design costs. Jim O. also said we are being asked for public money for a private building; it

would be for the major part of the fire suppression system although not the major part of the overall project. The reply noted that there are costs of water, running the system etc. of \$4-5000 per year that the Church will pay for. Second, we expect a large number of people (homeless, those take shelter, those who use the soup kitchen, etc.) who are not part of the private group to use the building. It is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day and is a very public building. Ralph added this a very important historic structure. Fire is the greatest threat as the frame is wooden. We would pay for the rest, so only this piece is public. Jim O. said that the only part CPA can pay for is fire suppression so we are asked to pay for the whole of this. Jim B. what you alluded to is strong, but we have other structures that could also ask for this. This would be precedent setting. We have limited funding. The Historic Commission should rank all the buildings that could ask for fire suppression. Laura said we could not ask them to rank all the fire suppression system projects. Mary noted that a previous Town Meeting turned down an \$8000 request for a church project from CPAC and this is a large amount, which CPAC has to be sell at Town Meeting. Since then we have funded several church projects. The Tiffany Glass window gets more enthusiasm than a fire suppression system. The CPA does allow funding of churches with a public benefit. A church member noted in a public comment that the footprint of this church vs the Hope Church is much bigger, and AA groups and others keep it constantly in use.

#2.North Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset Historical District Consultant – Steve Bloom (Chair) and Phil Shaver (member for the Committee) are working on this area to create it as a Historical District of 200 properties. Each house needs to be researched for deeds, maps, etc. and so it is very labor intensive. One of the big problems they have are members who are older and not very computer oriented. A lot of time was spent in learning to use a drop box etc. They have help from a graphics student from UMass, a student from Hampshire College and a couple of undergrads from UMass. When this is done this will be a very impressive data base. A person wanting to upgrade the windows on their house could check it to decide if a type of window is appropriate etc. The research will help set what is historically right within the District.

Questions from Committee and answers:

Marilyn Is it possible to get money from members and from people in the proposed Historical District--like for the student helper who really needs the money? They have done gotten some money but people are on fixed incomes and it is not right to ask them for money. The student would do it without money but that's not right. Laura noted that the Town needs this kind of inventory to know what should be preserved. The work is very labor intensive, Jim Oldham asked about the deadline. They hope to finish by spring Town Meeting of 2017. There are so many steps, and they are only at the second step of flow chart. They hope to get an extension of time to complete the work. Jim Oldham asked about the deadline since the money would only be available on July 1 and noted that the student who is doing the work cannot be reimbursed for the previous work. They will need other help such as preparing a PowerPoint for Town meeting. They want to pay \$19 per hour. Paris about asked the neighborhood attitude about this district such as affordability affects on the neighborhood. Steve said property values remain stable or increase in a historical district—and the proposed idea about creating a historical district came from the neighborhood to begin with. There were no further questions and Mary reminded them of the public hearing.

#3 Dickinson Museum Evergreens Fire Suppression System – Jane Wald (Executive Director of the Dickinson Museum) and Jeff Baker, Architect presented. Their request is meant to protect from the Evergreens from catastrophic loss. The Evergreens is listed on the State and National Historical Places and part of the Local Historic District. The Emily Dickinson Museum received about \$15,000 CPA funding about 10 years ago. That funding was very important to

the Museum and had great results. They got out from the shroud of hemlock trees and the house now has the colors that Emily Dickinson herself would have seen. This new money, if given, would help with this major Museum. Jeff spoke next. He is part of architectural firm that since early 1970's has been involved in preservation work. That was why he came on board--to save and restore the Emily Dickinson Museum as in the Master Plan. For the Evergreens, they laid out the important things to preserve it ---like keeping water out of building, roof work, outside painting etc.. There was a three inch river of water running though the building when they got there---so a lot had to be done in the past 10 years. All kinds of specialists worked on the building. Now it needs help to protect it from fire. Sprinkler systems are meant to save lives---NOT to preserve a historical building. The water would hurt the many artifacts that are in the Evergreens---even more than are in the main homestead. These are what Emily Dickinson knew---she would recognize this house. This is the human connection. It could disappear instantly; it's potentially ephemeral. This is why they recommend this system. They do have a fire detection system. But they need the mist that will be pulled in with the air that comes in---the very high humidity will put the fire out, a fire suppression system. This house is a National Historic Landmark---one of the most important sites in the country. Jonathan W from the Board of Governors noted Emily Dickinson walked between the two houses. He had thought that fire suppression would be pouring water on the house but that would destroy the Museum. The Evergreens has particular meaning to the people in Amherst

Questions from Committee and answers: Jim B. Yes, when people visit, this is where they want to go. It is an incredible resource---the number one historical place is the Emily Dickinson Museum. How does this request tie into future requests for the Emily Dickinson house? And talk a little about College's role in helping with the finances since they have 2.2 billion dollars and we have scarce resources? How often do the high school and middle school kids in Town get to use both houses? Ken Rosenthal, Chair of the Board of Governors, said It is not just a historic museum but also a cultural museum. Amherst College acquired the Homestead about 50 years ago. It was used as a home for a college family (the Mudgetts) and was open only very limited hours then. About a dozen years ago, the Evergreens became available. Then Amherst College came forward to become the stewards of the Evergreens (which could have had no caretaker) and together the Evergreens and the Emily Dickinson Homestead became the Museum. Only 10% of the visitors are local. So the Museum brings at least a million of dollar to the economy each year. Of the people who come, 84% say it is for first time. There are 50 people on the payroll. Amherst College gives \$95,000 per year and also some free services like engineering. Museum's overhead is very low thanks to Amherst College. So though technically the Museum is owned by the college, it brings in outside talent etc. to the Town. They estimate that they serve about 600 high school and college students each year. Wendy Kohler is a Member of Board of Governors. She chairs the interpretation and communications program. She is passionate about Emily Dickinson and detailed what they have done. With High School students, they co-produced an audio to compare now and then; 6-8 high school students performed. This is the most recent experience--- an interpretation of Emily Dickinson and it makes all the students feel that this town is theirs and Emily Dickinson is theirs. The Museum is an asset to education in the Town---a crown jewel like no other. Mary said we have to sell this in Town Meeting. But we also have the situation that Amherst College is so well endowed that it could give more money than a one to one match. Some feel that they could give more to fire and police etc. that they do not give that much to the Town. How do we deal with that? Jane explained that there was a formal Memorandum of Understanding created when the Emily Dickinson Museum was established. The Museum was made responsible for restoration and fund raising. They raise 70% of their budget and there is a small endowment. So they are outside the College's main mission. There is not a way that they know of to increase the contribution from Amherst College. The Museum programs are funded through their own fund

raising. One way Amherst College supports the Museum is with a building reserve—a cultural facilities grant (\$380,000)—that they did not have before, and they will match CPA funds one to one. Paris expressed concern that it is not really accessible for some Amherst residents—Ken R said they are intensifying admission. Jane said the public is very welcome on the tours. Jane noted that there are a number of free of charge days throughout the year. Wendy mentioned that if a child comes, and then he or she can bring family back free. Every college student is free. Mary said they should think about how to increase accessibility for Amherst residents. Jim O. would like free admission to Amherst citizens increased. People have to know that free admission exists—he would like it formalized and popularized to Amherst Public. He mentioned that we have lots of requests this year more than the money we have. How would you respond if we would recommend less? Ken R said that we would try to raise the money because it is so critical. Laura asked how much the total fire suppression system cost—\$200,000 with the one to one match or \$400,000. It was the latter. Jim O will you popularize the free admission times? Ken answered, we are doing it but need to shout it out. Mary asked for the Power Point from Jane to be sent to her.

#1 Amherst Historical Society and Museum - legal/carpentry/dendrology—Jim Wald member of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society and the Strong House) and Georgia Barnhill, President of the Board of Trustees. The Strong house is a grand and old house from the 1750's era—one of oldest in Amherst and built by one of the 10 richest men. In 1899 it became a Museum and in 1903 it received a State charter as historical society and Museum library. It gets by on a shoestring budget. He discussed previous projects done with CPA money. Painting showed that some carpentry is needed to the building envelop. Also they need clarification of legal situation. The will stated that certain things were to be maintained in perpetuity such as the outer structure footprint. This ties their hands. They would like to go the State about this, which would entail legal costs. A small piece of the request would go for the dendrochronology, which would allow them to date parts of the building. Paris asked about the dendrochronology. Georgia explained that they can determine the exact age of the timbers in the house, revealing the starting dates and dates of additions. The timber could have been cured or not before building. The more you know about the building, the better for restoration. In the 18th C, timbers were not cured before building, which makes the ages determined very precise. Jim W. noted that a larger part of historic preservation involves research.

Questions from Committee and answers: Jim O. Concerning the legal fees, it was not clear to him what is the constraint right now—the library expansion? What are the needs and future goals of the Museum? Jim W. One example—If we could raise the building and put a cellar under it—that could house climate controlled storage. Or we could put in an elevator or a meeting room and display space. Georgia said that this will lock the Museum into its current space. No programs can be held there. There is no rest room on first floor. Jim W said once he needed to carry a person in a wheel chair upstairs to use the restroom. Marilyn wanted to know where the money for all that building would come from? Jim W thought it would be better to capital campaign with library. Is there an alternative space for climate controlled storage and other needs? Mary said maybe the building should be left like it is; if one put in all those new things, it would not be representative of its age any longer. Jim W. said you could put open hearth cooking with a historical kitchen outside. Mary said not without a fire suppression system! Carol asked if there is a legal precedent for using CPA money for legal fees. Jim W gave some examples. Mary asked if you only got a portion of your request, what would it be? Georgia said with the will in place, they are hamstrung.

#5 Amherst Historical Commission, Christopher Thompson Memorial Stone – Jonathan Tucker and Bob Romer, who requested the study spoke. The request came from work five years ago on an event to recognize black civil war veterans, when he learned about Christopher Thompson. He proposes the memorial stone for Christopher Thompson to inform the citizens about the African-American part of the Cemetery. It would be a historical, interpretive sign, to call attention to Amherst black Civil War soldiers, and tell how they enlisted and served in family groups. It would show how West Cemetery became the final resting place for them and would give recognition to Christopher Thompson, who does not have a stone but is probably buried there. It which would attract visitors' attention because it would be newer. By honoring them, it would give our citizens a point of pride. There are few visible markers of our history. The Historical Commission could list the names of the others, their cavalry and two of the three regiments. Two of the Thompsons died in the war, James survived his wounds. Five members of the family fought—three are buried in West Cemetery. In the future, one could use the stone as a marker for the remarkable history of this family. Jonathan then talked about the stone in the planning context and read from a legal message from Town Counsel that he had just received. Amherst has done long range planning for West Cemetery. The purpose of the plan is to guide the assessment, rehabilitation and interpretation of the Cemetery. It is one of Amherst's most prominent historic sites, notably the African-American section. The plan recommends interpretive signs, a bench and quiet spot for contemplation for this section. That is the context for this request: The stone would be part of the rehabilitation and part of our community history. The legal opinion cited supports the view that it would be a permanent capital improvement for rehabilitation; it makes the Cemetery more functional for its intended purpose and for its historical purpose.

Questions from Committee and answers: Mary was not comfortable with this because it was not clear to her that a new stone could be rehabilitation and that it is a qualified kind of expense. She would prefer private fund raising. Ken said the Town owes Christopher Thompson something for his service. Frequently, activities that constitute historic preservation are historical signs; they preserve what happened there. The Cemetery is Amherst's history. If we did nothing with it, the history would be lost. Everything they did is in there. Jim O said you (Jonathan) describe the amounts of funds left—which pre-date when he (Jim) came on the CPA committee. There is lots of money left over that has not been spent even on Cemetery restoration—so the question is this: is there a process for getting the work done? Should more money be put in or should some of the other money be repurposed? Jonathan answered that some of these things have been done such as design of signs. Some depend on other work yet to be done. Bob said he can guarantee this work will be done next summer. Jonathan said a plot has been purchased by Christopher Thompson's son. And permission has been granted to install the stone on that plot, so there has been community involvement on this. Mary first thought this a good idea but feels you can't create a historic resource. She also asked about the bench because she thought the \$20,000 previously funded was to include a bench, etc. Is that included? No. Jonathan said that that bench was in a separate project for landscaping. Volunteers began the planting. Bob said as far as anyone knows, the African-American section was never set apart legally but by custom. Andy said that regarding the lawyer letter, there are two findings CPAC has to make as the lawyer is not guaranteeing, only stating her opinion 1. CPAC has to say this rehabilitates and 2. CPAC has to state that the stone makes the Cemetery more functional for its intended use. Andy say some of the difficulty comes from the a gravestone—and saying this is a memorial and interpretive sign. He would go back to Shirin and ask if it would be more appropriate if really was not a stone. Diana asked if a sign would be better since we don't know where Christopher Stone is buried. Jonathan said that a sign is more

intrusive than a stone that has that information. Jim found this presentation helped clarify the issues for him.

#15. Historical Commission Due Diligence Funds Jonathan then discussed the Historical Commission Due Diligence Request for \$10,000, which detailed spending since 2010. He noted that there is uncertainty re historical cores of certain buildings, which the developers are not interested in using on site. The money they have been using will run out. See new printout. There are buildings in Town which may have to be moved in part or whole and they need to find out which can be moved. We lost one 1830's housed on S.E. Street, which we did not have the resources to save. In a number of projects, the Historical Commission will have to serve as an independent agent to say if some issues are true or not true and may need a consultant. Fire station location and all those other sites are things that the Historical Commission will have to deal with in the next couple of years.

Questions from Committee and answers: Laura noted we could have used discussion about the five story building that is going to go up near West Cemetery and that it would have been better for the Historical Commission to have handled this than UMass. Marylyn asked about the \$10,000 request from the Commission and Jonathan said it would last about 2 years. There are many private and public projects in the future. Jim O. asked If CPA recommends and Town Meeting approves the money requested, who makes the decision about how the money get used? Is it the Historical Commission? Yes, they would vote it. Previous projects listed were all voted. Jim O. also asked about the list of prioritized projects submitted to CPAC, and Jonathan reported that the vote was unanimous on these. Jim B asked how do you steer these requests? There is a perception that we're trying to preserve everything. How far back do you go in history when you try to preserve something? These monies for due diligence. How do the options get presented? Laura answered that the structure has to meet criteria before you can do a demolition delay, and it is a two-step process that comes from the State. Jonathan said there is a filtering that tries to determine the relative significance and how and why it is significant. At a hearing there are times when we say no—It is not an automatic yes. Jim B. I am just trying to say that the Town has limited resources. Jonathan said that first we consider whether to hold a hearing or not. Mary noted that \$3000 dollars are left in the due diligence fund of the Historical Commission. There is a timing issue with the request for documenting in photos the little Red Schoolhouse building. Could you do it with the \$3000 you have? They would have to put on Historical Commission's agenda the request concerning the Schoolhouse.

#14. Little Red School House – Carol Gray presented the request. She hopes to save the building but is trying to be realistic. The history would be worth saving. There could be Interviews with people walking though the building while discussing how the building was used. The request is not for \$10,000 any longer but for \$5000 for a historian plus \$1900 for related expenses. This request is unusual because the building will disappear, and so this would be preservation in different way. There are questions that we need to get answered by Town Counsel. We would include 3d imaging. The May 19th demolition date will surely be delayed by graduation and could not happened on that day. Deerfield got \$20,000 in CPA funds to document village history. So this idea has been used in some communities. The architectural firm is well known, and the school photos and interviews can illustrate the educational role the building provided. Lots of groups including Hampshire College and UMass have looked at the school and support it, including historic Northampton. Carol thinks this needs a professional to do the oral history. There are many positive comments online.

Questions from Committee and answers: Jim O asked if there were follow up questions that she had been asked. She said one was about timing. It is not clear what the actual timing would be. Fund-raising she just cannot manage. She thinks they need to have a professional historian to do this, not students from a lab at one of the schools. Jim B. said the timing puts us in a bind since the CPA money would not be available until in July 1. A number of possibilities were discussed. Carol pointed out that the worst that could happen if the money was awarded since it could not be spent until after July 1 is that CPAC could get the money back. Jim O. said maybe the college would delay 40 days. Mary said perhaps the Historical Commission could do this as they could beat the time crunch.

Approve any Minutes: None were moved and voted..

Next Meetings:

- Tuesday, February 23, 2016 – Public Hearing, Discussion, possible voting – Town Room
- Monday, March 7, 2016 – Discussion, Voting recommendations – First Floor Meeting Room
- Tuesday, March 22, 2016 – Discussion, possible vote on proposals if needed, Review Annual Town Meeting Report, Town Meeting preparations – First Floor Meeting Room

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 10:17 was made by Jim O., seconded by Paris and voted unanimously.

Documents Distributed

Agenda, 1 page

Draft Minutes 2016-1-26, 5 pages

CPA Amherst History Museum Responses, January 2016, 6 pages

CPA FY17 Historical Commission Due Diligence Request, 1/28/2016, 2 pages

Respectfully submitted by Diana Stein, acting clerk
Approved April 19, 2016